

**Amendments to the Claims:**

1 - 11. (Previously Canceled)

12. (Currently amended) An identity card ~~document~~ comprising:

a ~~document~~ substrate and a protective coating secured to the ~~document~~ substrate, wherein the protective coating is less than 1/50 mm thick and has been deposited on the substrate out of the gas and/or plasma phase; and

the substrate is provided with information on the surface thereof and adhesion of the information with respect to the protective coating is greater than with respect to the substrate.

13. (Currently amended) An identity card ~~document~~ as set forth in claim 12 wherein the protective coating comprises metal oxides.

14. (Currently amended) An identity card ~~document~~ as set forth in claim 12 wherein the coating contains silanes and/or silazanes.

15. (Currently amended) An identity card ~~document~~ as set forth in claim 12 wherein the protective coating contains fluoride.

16. (Currently amended) An identity card ~~document~~ as set forth in claim 12 wherein at least an outside surface of the protective coating has self-cleaning properties.

17. (Currently amended) An identity card ~~document~~ as set forth in claim 12 wherein at least an outside surface of the protective coating has self-healing properties.

18. (Currently amended) An identity card ~~document~~ as set forth in claim 12 wherein the refractive index of the protective coating is irreversibly variable after application to the ~~document~~ substrate.

19. (Currently amended) An identity card ~~document~~ as set forth in claim 18 wherein the refractive index is variable by the action of laser light.
20. (Currently amended) An identity card ~~document~~ as set forth in claim 12 wherein the substrate comprises a polycarbonate.
21. (Currently amended) An identity card ~~document~~ as set forth in claim 12 wherein the protective coating can be penetrated by laser light to personalize the substrate without producing an optical variation in the protective coating.
22. (Canceled)
23. (Currently amended) An identity card ~~document~~, comprising:  
a ~~document~~ substrate having a surface;  
a protective coating disposed on the surface; the protective coating is at least partially transparent, and is less than 1/50 mm thick; and the ~~document~~ substrate includes an electronic chip, and the protective coating is disposed over the electronic chip.
24. (Currently amended) The identity card ~~document~~ of claim 23, wherein the protective coating is less than 1/500 mm thick.
25. (Currently amended) The identity card ~~document~~ of claim 23, wherein the ~~document-substrate~~ identity card comprises a plastic card ~~or an identity card~~.
26. (Canceled)
27. (Currently amended) The identity card ~~document~~ of claim 23, wherein the protective coating comprises a ceramic material or a carbon material.

28. (Currently amended) The identity card ~~document~~ of claim 23, wherein the surface includes individualization, and the individualization is covered by the protective coating.

29. (Currently amended) The identity card ~~document~~ of claim 23, wherein the refractive index of the protective coating is irreversibly variable, and the protective coating includes at least one portion whose refractive index has been varied by laser radiation.

30. (Currently amended) The identity card ~~document~~ of claim 29, where the protective coating includes a plurality of said portions, and at least some of the plurality of said portions vary in color.

31. (Canceled)

32. (Canceled)

33. (Canceled)

34. (Currently amended) An identity card ~~document~~ as set forth in claim 12 comprising a plurality of layers of the protective coating.

35. (Currently amended) The identity card ~~document~~ of claim 23 comprising a plurality of layers of the protective coating.